

Upper Truckee R
Erosion Control. 61

UPPER TRUCKEE RIVER -- EROSION CONTROL - SLIDE TALK

1. Most of you know that before white man arrived, Lake Tahoe supported a remarkable population of native Lahontan cutthroat trout-- that was used by the Washoe Indians as food -- that supported a commercial fishery and an excellent sport fishery.

Between about 1910 - 1940, the fish population suffered a decline -- cutthroat disappeared and fishery now depends largely upon.

2. Mackinaw or Lake Trout

3. Rainbow

4. Brown

5. Kokanee salmon were introduced in 1948.

6. Fishing in Tahoe is not particularly good -- certainly not as good as it can and should be.

7. Last year, California Legislature approved our participation in a research study to find ways of improving it.

Almo Cordone - Biologist in charge of study.

Research takes time - many years before sound answers are found and in the meantime Tahoe continues to change.

8. One problem we are especially concerned about is the destruction of spawning grounds for fish like the rainbow and brown trout that must spawn in streams. These trout cannot or will not spawn in the lake and although kokanee do, they prefer the streams.

The preservation of breeding or spawning areas is so basic to conservation of fish and wildlife that it really needs no explanation. It simply must be done.

Let's take a look at the spawning grounds for Lake Tahoe.

9. Ward Creek
10. Blackwood
11. Taylor
12. Meeks
13. Upper Truckee

All of these streams have had problems, and we have attempted to solve them.

14. Streamflow maintenance dams have been built wherever there are reasonably good damsites.
 15. Fish Screens
 16. Beaver Dams -- etc. - diversion
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I came to talk of a particular problem on a particular stream -- the Upper Truckee River.

17. Starts at streamflow maintenance dam built on Round Lake in 1953.
 18. Drops rapidly down mountain
 19. Past Alpine Campground
 20. Across valley floor.
 21. Into Lake Tahoe - this is the largest and by far, the most important spawning tributary to the Lake. I would judge that it is at least ten times as important as all the other tributaries put together.
- Before you can understand the problem, you must know something of the sex habits of fish.
22. Here are kokanee salmon in Upper Truckee getting ready to reproduce -- dig nests, cover with gravel.
 23. Eggs must be constantly bathed in fresh clean water or they will die -- must have clean gravel.
 24. Sand deposited clogs the gravel - reduce flow and eggs are destroyed. Sand is not only harmful to eggs but reduce food supply and shelter needed by young fish as they move downstream.

About half of what was good spawning gravel in Upper Truckee River seven years ago is now covered with sand.

25. Basic problem - soil erosion
26. Formerly caused by overgrazing by cattle.
27. Cattle are now gone from most of river, but banks will not heal themselves.
28. An open sore like this will pour enough sand into the stream to destroy thousands of trout.
29. Erosion starts in Big Meadows.

Next few slides show you some typical scene along river.

30. Cat operator - can do much harm.
31. Gravel mine
32. Sediment below gravel mine.
33. Pilot project 1958 - Larry Hall's property.
34. Banks graded -- seeded, fertilized, watered.
35. Banks rip-raped -- outside turns - 1959.
36. 1959 - fair grass crop
37. We believe this is the answer, BUT how to do it. Six steps to success.

We need your help.

Almost all of stream is private land.